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### **Author Tackles Islamophobia and Holds the West Accountable**

MINNEAPOLIS (April 30, 2015) -- Getting to the heart of Islamophobia just got easier with the release of 'The Fear of Islam' (Fortress Press 2015), a piercing commentary on the West's past and current anxieties about Islam and those who practice it. Written by Todd Green, professor of religion at Luther College, the book tackles the US and Europe's xenophobic association of Islam with violence, misogyny, and intolerance, and helps readers sift fact from fiction when it comes to history's definitive episodes of anti-Muslim hostility, including the Crusades, European colonialism, the Rushdie affair, the Danish cartoon controversy, and the war on terror.

"Sadly, much of what we know about Islam, or what we think we know, comes from those who manufacture the fear of Islam for personal or political gain," says Green, who devotes several chapters to these sources of misinformation. He traces Islamophobia to self-serving foreign policies, religious illiteracy, and a lack of personal relationships across religious communities. "Given that two-thirds of Americans do not personally know a Muslim, the unfortunate reality is that most of the Muslims we 'know' are the ones we see on CNN or on the silver screen —in other words, scary Muslims."

Accusations that Islam is the primary culprit in the deaths of innocent civilians, or that Islam prohibits women from getting an education, are exactly the types of unwarranted claims that Green challenges. He calls attention to telling statistics: in the US, Muslim women are more likely to have a college degree than Christian women, and FBI reports show that in the last several decades, 94% of terrorist attacks in the US were committed by non-Muslims. "Because Muslims have stood in the way of Western imperial ambitions," notes Green, "the West has cast Muslims as hostile enemies and threats to its survival."

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Green was inspired by his early life growing up in the evangelical South where he knew, from a young age, that he didn't fit neatly into the dominant religious narrative. He was acutely aware of how it felt to be a religious outsider, even though he was still a part of the Christian fold. His understanding intensified when he immigrated to Sweden for a period as a young adult and where, as an American, he found that many of his fellow immigrants faced far greater challenges than he, either because of their skin color or their Muslim background. These experiences triggered a keen interest in the obstacles that religious outsiders, particularly Muslims, face in the West.

The end goal of the book, Green points out, is to move beyond stereotypes and improve the way we talk about Islam. "We're doing a lousy job in the West when it comes to having a rational, informed conversation about Muslims and Islam. We've got to do better. Lives depend on it. Our nation's future depends on it."

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